

Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf

The Sand-dunes

Sūrah Al-Aḥkāf is Makkī. It has 35 Verses and 4 Sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

حَمْدٌ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٢﴾ مَا خَلَقْنَا
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ وَالَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا عَمَّا أُنذِرُوا مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ أَرُونَنِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
إِيتُونَنِي بِكِتَابٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَثَرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤﴾
وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ
الْقِيَمَةِ وَهُمْ عَنِ دُعَائِهِمْ غَفُلُونَ ﴿٥﴾ وَإِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا لَهُمْ
أَعْدَاءً وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

Hā Mīm. [1] This is the revelation of the book from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. [2] We did not create the heavens and the earth but with true purpose and for a specified term. And those who disbelieve are averse to what they are warned of. [3] Say, "Tell me about those whom you invoke instead of Allah, (and) show me what they have created of the earth; Or have they a share in (the creation of) the heavens? Bring to me a book

(revealed) before this one, or a trace of knowledge, if you are truthful. [4] And who is more astray than him who invokes, instead of Allah, such a one as will not respond to him until the Day of Judgement; and they are totally unaware of their prayers, [5] and when people will be assembled (on the Day of Judgment), they will be enemies to them, and will refuse even their having worshipped them. [6]

Commentary

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ (Say, "Tell me about those whom you invoke instead of Allah,...46:4) In these verses, the claim of the polytheists about the existence of some other gods has been refuted by demanding a proof to substantiate this claim, because no claim can be accepted, neither rationally nor according to the religious principles, unless it is proved by concrete evidences to support it. Then dealing with all possible types of arguments, it has been proved that they do not have any evidence or proof in their favor, and that their insisting on such a baseless claim is nothing but deviation from the truth. The arguments have been classified by these verses in three types. One is a rational argument. Verse 4 negates any argument of this type in their favor by saying, أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ "Show me what they have created of the earth; Or have they a share in (the creation of) the heavens?" (46:4)

The second type of argument is that which refers to and relies on the statement of an authority. It is obvious that, in any matter concerning Allah, no one can be an authority except Allah Himself, and His statements can be proved either by the divine books, like Torah, Injīl or Qur'ān, or by the sayings of the prophets sent by Him. Negation of the first type of authority in their case is established by saying, اْتُونِي بِكِتَابٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا "Bring to me a book (revealed) before this one, (46:4)" meaning that if you have any proof of this type, then bring the book revealed before the Qur'ān which allows idol-worship. And the second type of argument (that may be based on the saying of a prophet) has been negated by saying, أَوْ أَمْرًا مِنْ عِلْمٍ "or a trace of knowledge," (46:4) meaning thereby that if you cannot bring any revealed book to prove the validity of idol-worship, then at least put forward any authentic saying of any prophet which proves your contention. And if you can do neither, then your words and deeds are totally misguided.

The original word used in the text is *اْتَرَهُ* 'athārah' which is an infinitive in the sense of 'reporting' and has been explained by 'Ikrimah and Muqātil to mean a dictum of a prophet.

The explanation given above is taken from the Tafsīr of Qurṭubī, and this is the explanation accepted by most exegetes. There are some other views in the interpretation of this verse, but they are neither well-established, nor in full harmony with the textual structure. Therefore, they are not adopted by the majority of the exegetes. (Allah knows best)

Verses 7 - 10

وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ
هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ ۚ قُلْ إِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ
لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۚ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ ۚ كَفَىٰ بِهِ شَهِيدًا ۚ بَيْنِي
وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۚ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٨﴾ قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ
وَمَا أَدْرِى مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ ۚ إِنِ اتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا إِلَّا
نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٩﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كَانَ مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ وَشَهِدَ
شَهِدٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ عَلَىٰ مِثْلِهِ فَأَمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

And when Our verses are recited to them in all their clarity, the disbelievers say about the truth when it comes to them, "This is an open magic." [7] Is it that they, rather, say, "He has forged it (the Qur'an)"? Say, "If I have forged it, then you do not have any power to help me against Allah. He is well aware of that in which you indulge. He is enough as a witness between me and you, and He is the Most-Forgiving, the Very-Merciful." [8] Say, "I am not something unprecedented among the messengers, and I do not know what will be done to me or to you. I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me, and I am only a clear warner. [9] Say, "Tell me, If it (the Qur'an) is from Allah and you reject it, and a

witness from the children of Isrā'īl testifies about something similar to it and comes to believe (in it), while you persist in your arrogance, (then, how unjust you are!) Surely, Allah does not give guidance to the unjust people. [10]

Commentary

وَمَا أَدْرِى مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ ط إِنَّا نَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ (and I do not know what will be done to me or to you. I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me - 46:9) The sentence, "I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me," has been used here as an 'exception' to the previous sentence, meaning thereby that I do not know anything except what is revealed to me through *wahy*. The gist of the explanation given to this verse by Imām Ḍaḥḥāk رحمه الله تعالى is that the knowledge of some unseen things can be obtained by the Holy Prophet ﷺ only through *wahy*, and he does not have any knowledge about those unseen things which were not revealed to him through *wahy*, be they about his own self, about the believers and disbelievers among his people, or about matters pertaining to this world or to the Hereafter. Whatever the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said about the unseen things is obtained through *wahy*. The noble Qur'ān has declared that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was blessed by the knowledge of innumerable things from the Unseen (*ghaib*), but all this knowledge was given to him by the divine revelation. This is exactly what the Holy Qur'ān means by saying,

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ

"These are some reports from the unseen (events) which We reveal to you." (11: 49)

Details of matters relating to the Hereafter, Hell, Paradise, accountability, reward and punishment are given in the Holy Qur'ān itself, and many details of certain future events that had to take place in this world are given in authentic *aḥādīth* reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus the substance of the present verse is simply that the knowledge of the Holy Prophet about the Unseen is not all-encompassing as is that of Allah Almighty, nor is it independently obtained; he simply reproduces whatever Allah Almighty tells him through *wahy*.

After having reproduced this explanation, the author of Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī says,

"It is my belief that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not leave this world until he was blessed by *wahy* with such a knowledge about Allah Ta'ālā, His attributes and about all those things the knowledge of which could be meritorious that no other in the whole universe has ever been blessed with. But I do not believe that unawareness about trivial worldly affairs like the acts of some particular individuals and what they do at their homes and what happens to them one day or the other can in any way reduce his excellence."

Dictate of etiquette regarding the knowledge of the Holy Prophet ﷺ about unseen matters

Respect for the Holy Prophet ﷺ demands that one should not say that he did not know the Unseen; rather one should say that Allah Ta'ālā had given such vast knowledge of unseen matters to him as was not given to any other prophet.

The explanation given by some exegetes that the negation in this verse is only about the unseen affairs pertaining to this world, and not about the Hereafter (as stated by Qurtubī) is probably because they have not taken the words, "I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me," in the sense of an exception to the previous sentence; hence the negation of the knowledge of unseen things has been made specific to the affairs of this world, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ has told very clearly about the Hereafter that the Mu'min would go to Paradise, and the 'kafir' would go to Hell.

وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ عَلَى مِثْلِهِ فَامْنٌ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ (and a witness from the children of Isra'il testifies about something similar to it and comes to believe in it while you persist in your arrogance, [then, how unjust you are!])....- 46:10) The subject of this verse is almost the same as of the verse of the last chapter of Sūrah As-Shu'ara'

أَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ آيَةٌ أَنْ يَعْلَمَهُ عُلَمَاءُ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ

Is it not a proof for them that the knowledgeable of the children of Isra'īl recognize him (the Prophet)? (26: 197)

The gist is that these ignorant Jews and Christians who deny the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and disbelieve the Qur'ān are ignorant of their own books, because many scholars of Banī Isra'īl having found the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and its signs mentioned in

their books and having witnessed those signs, have come to believe in him. Even the testimony of their own scholars is not enough for these ignorant people.

Verse 10 of this Sūrah states that their falsification of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and their claim about the Qur'ān that it is a forgery, is baseless firstly because, as mentioned in verse 8, if anyone lays a false claim to prophethood, he has to be eliminated by the divine punishment right in this world, so that the common people may be saved from his fraudulent claims, Secondly, if they do not accept this argument, they should, at least, not overlook the possibility that if his claim is correct, and this book is actually from Allah Ta'ālā, and they continue to persist in their arrogance, denial and disbelief, specially when one of their own learned scholar from Banī Isrā'īl testifies the Book to be from Allah, and comes to believe in it, then what will be their end and how severe a punishment will they deserve?

This verse does not name any particular scholar of Banī Isrā'īl, nor does it specify whether the testimony had already been given before this verse was revealed, or it would come afterwards. It, in effect, sounds a warning that should such a situation have already arisen or if it should arise in future, one should worry about saving one's skin. Therefore, understanding this verse is not dependent upon the determination of a particular testifier; rather all the Jews and Christians who embraced Islam, of which Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām is more prominent, are included herein, although he embraced Islam in Madīnah, while this verse was revealed in Makkah. (Ibn Kathīr)

The statement by Sayyidnā Sa'd ﷺ reported in some narrations of Bukhārī, Muslim and Nasa'ī, that this verse was revealed about Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ﷺ and the same statement from Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Mujahid, Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah, etc. is not against this verse being Makki, as in this case, it will be a prophecy for the future. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 11 - 12

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَإِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوا بِهِ فَسَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِفْكٌ قَدِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كَتَبَ مُوسَى

إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً ۖ وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانِ عَرَبِيًّا لِّيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
 ۚ وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

And the disbelievers say about the believers, "Had it (Islamic faith) been a good thing, these (weak and poor) people would not have preceded us (in proceeding) towards it." And since they did not accept guidance through it (the Qur'ān), they will say, "This is a classical lie." [11] And before this there was the Book of Mūsā, a guide and a mercy. And this is a Book confirming (it) in Arabic tongue, that it may warn the wrongdoers and give good news to those who are good in deeds. [12]

Commentary

لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُونَا إِلَيْهِ (Had it [Islamic faith] been a good thing, these [weak and poor] people would not have preceded us [in proceeding] towards it. - 46:11) Arrogance and pride pervert the human intellect also. An arrogant person considers his own opinions and deeds to be the criteria for determining right and wrong, good and bad. If he does not like anything, no matter how well it is believed to be by others, he considers all those people to be stupid, while he himself is stupid. The arrogance and pride of the infidels was of this very kind, and since they did not like Islamic faith, they used to say about its lovers that had it been a good thing, they themselves would have been the first to adopt it, and that one should not trust the choice of these poor people.

Ibn Mundhir رحمه الله تعالى etc., have reproduced a narration according to which this verse was revealed about a slave-girl of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه named Zunairah who had embraced Islam when he was still a disbeliever. She used to be beaten up and threatened by him, so that she might give up Islam somehow or the other, and the kuffar of Quraish used to say that had Islamic faith been a good thing, such a worthless woman as Zunairah would not have preceded us in embracing it. (Mazḥarī)

وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كِتَابٌ مُّوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً (And before this, there was the Book of Mūsā, a guide and a mercy. - 46:12) This verse, for one thing, gives proof of the statement mentioned in verse 9 that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not an unprecedented messenger and Qur'ān is not a singular divine Book which

may create doubts in the minds. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام came before him ﷻ as a messenger, and Torah was revealed to him which is accepted by all these Jews and Christians. Secondly, it supports the verse 10 above, because Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Torah themselves are witnesses to the Holy Prophet ﷺ being the messenger of Allah and the Qur'ān being Allah's Book.

Verses 13 - 20

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا جَزَاءٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِضْلُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّذِي قَالَ لِيَا أَلِدِيهِ أَفٍّ لَّكَمَّا اتَّعَذَّبْنِي أَنْ أَخْرَجَ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ الْقُرُونُ مِنْ قَبْلِي ۚ وَهُمَا يَسْتَغِيثَنِ اللَّهَ وَيْلَكَ آمِنْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ مَّا فَيَقُولُ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَةٍ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا وَلِيُوفيَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ أَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا ۖ فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ

الْهُونَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

Surely, those who said, "Our Lord is Allah" then stayed firm, for them, there is no fear, nor shall they grieve. [13] Those are the people of Paradise, living there forever, as a reward for what they used to do. [14] And We have enjoined upon man to do good to his parents. His mother carried him with toil and delivered him with toil. And his carrying and his weaning is (in) thirty months, until when he attains his maturity, and reaches forty years, he says, "My Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favor You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I do righteous deeds that You like. And grant for my benefit goodness in my progeny. Of course, I repent to you, and truly I am one of those who submit to You." [15] Such are the people from whom We accept the best of what they did, and overlook their evils, (so as they will be) among the people of the Paradise according to the true promise that was made to them. [16] And (Contrary to this is the case of) the one who said to his parents, "Fie upon you both! Do you promise to me that I shall be brought out (from the grave), while generations have passed before me?" And they (the parents) were crying for Allah's help, (and saying to their son,) "Woe to you. Believe. Allah's promise is certainly true." Then he says, "This is nothing but the tales of the ancients." [17] Such are the people on whom the word (of punishment) has come true along with the communities of the Jinn and the humans that have passed before them. Surely they were losers. [18] And for each (of these two groups) there are (different) ranks, because of what they did, and so that He may repay them in full for their deeds, and they will not be wronged. [19] And the day the disbelievers will be presented before the Fire, (it will be said to them,) "You have consumed your good things in your worldly life, and have enjoyed them. So, today you will be punished with the torment of humiliation for the arrogance you used to show on earth having no right (to do so), and for the sins you used to commit. [20]

Commentary

The first two of the above verses are a complement to the previous

verses which announce punishment for the unjust, and glad tidings of success and reward for the virtuous Muslims. In the first verse إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا "Surely, those who said, 'Our Lord is Allah' then stayed firm, (46:13)" all the basic faith and virtuous deeds required by Islam have been comprehensively referred to with great eloquence. The admission that رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ "Our Lord is Allah." is the whole of faith, and staying firm in it includes holding on to it till death, as well as carrying out all its obligations. The meaning and importance of *istiqamah* ('Staying firm'), have been explained in detail in the commentary of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah (41:30). In this verse here, those who embrace faith and remain steadfast to it are being promised freedom from anxiety and suffering in future, and dispelling of their grief and sorrow over past sufferings. The following verse gives glad tidings of the permanence and continuity of this matchless comfort. In the four verses which follow, man is being directed to behave beautifully with his parents, and is being censured for ill-behaviour towards them; and in this context, the kindness of the parents to him and the parents' bearing hard labor and toiling for their children have been mentioned, and then man has been advised to repent and turn towards Allah Ta'ālā when he gets older. The connection between these verses and the earlier ones, according to Ibn Kathīr, is that the usual style of the Holy Qur'ān is to instruct man to behave beautifully, to serve and to obey his parents along with the call to obey and worship Allah Almighty. Many verses of the Holy Qur'ān in various Sūrahs bear witness to this style. Here also, in the same way, mention has been made of beautiful behaviour for parents alongwith the call to believe in the Oneness of Allah Ta'ālā. And Qurṭubī, with reference to Qushairi has stated the connection to be that there is a kind of solace in it for the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he should continue calling people towards faith and '*tauḥīd*' (the Oneness of Allah) and should not be disheartened if some people do not accept his invitation, because men, by nature, are of diverse characteristics, and some of them do not refrain even from ill-treatment to their parents. (Allah knows best)

In any case, the real subject of these four verses is to instruct man to behave beautifully with one's parents, and in that context there are other instructions also. Although some narrations of *ḥadīth* indicate that these verses were revealed about Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, it is obvious that even if any verse of the Qur'ān is revealed about any particular person or about any particular incident, the rule laid down thereby remains

generally applicable to all. Therefore, even if the verse was revealed about Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, its application is general, regardless of some specifications of age etc. that may appear particular to him.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا (And We have enjoined upon man to do good to his parents.- 46:15) The word *wasīyyah* used in the text means 'emphatic order' and *iḥsān* means 'doing good' or 'behaving beautifully' which includes service, obedience, respect and reverence.

حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا (His mother carried him with toil and delivered him with toil.- 46:15) The word *kurh* means the toil that one has to endure for some reason, while *karh* means the toil one has to undertake under compulsion from someone else. This sentence puts emphasis on the instruction given in the previous sentence for doing good to the parents, and spells out one of the reasons for it. The verse addresses everyone and draws his attention to the fact that parents have gone through hardships and have endured toil for his sake, right from his birth up to his youth. The toil and labor of the mother, specially, is much more prominent. That is why only toil of mother has been stated here by reminding that she carries the baby inside her womb during pregnancy of nine long months, during which she had to bear all kinds of hardship and suffering, and then she endures extreme pain during delivery.

Mother has more rights than father

Although the first part of this verse is a command to do good to both the parents, the second sentence refers only to the hardships suffered by the mother, because they are unavoidable, and no child can be born without them. Every mother has to go through the problems of pregnancy and severe pains of delivery. As against this, it is not necessary for a father that he suffers any hardship in bringing up and educating the child, if he can afford to pay somebody else for these services. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ has given more rights to the mother than anybody else. According to a *ḥadīth*, He has said,

صِلْ أُمَّكَ ثُمَّ أُمَّكَ ثُمَّ أَبَاكَ ثُمَّ أَدْنَاكَ فَأَدْنَاكَ

"Do good to and serve your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, then the near relatives and then those who come after them." (Mazharī)

وَحَمْلُهُ وَفُطْلُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا (And his carrying and his weaning is in thirty

months - 46:15). This sentence too describes the hardships suffered by mother for her baby. It points out that even after suffering hardships during the pregnancy and the severe labor pains, the mother does not get respite from toils, because the natural food of the infant is in her breasts, and she has to suckle the infant.

This verse states that the total period of pregnancy and then of weaning is thirty months, Sayyidnā ‘Alī عليه السلام has deduced from this verse that the minimum period of pregnancy is six months, because the Holy Qur’ān has determined the maximum weaning period as two complete years in another verse which says,

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ

And mothers suckle their children for full two years; it is for one who wants to complete (the period of) suckling. (2: 233)

The total period of pregnancy and suckling has been mentioned in the verse under discussion (46:15) as thirty months. If the maximum period of suckling, that is twenty four months according to the verse 2:233 cited above, is deducted from thirty months, the balance is no more than six months which has been taken as the minimum period of pregnancy.

It is narrated that during the period of Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān عليه السلام, a woman gave birth to a child in six months, as against the normal period of nine months, or at least seven months. Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān عليه السلام decided this to be the case of an illegitimate birth and gave orders for punishment. When Sayyidnā ‘Alī عليه السلام came to know the incident, he advised Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān عليه السلام against the decision, and argued that the minimum period of pregnancy is six months as deduced from the verses mentioned above. Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān عليه السلام accepted his argument and cancelled his order. (Qurṭubī)

That is why all the jurists of the Ummah are unanimous on the point that the minimum period of pregnancy can be six months, while they differ about the maximum period of pregnancy, because the Holy Qur’ān has not given any ruling about it.

Conclusion

This verse has defined the minimum period of pregnancy to be six months; a perfect and sound baby cannot be born in a lesser period; the

maximum period has not been defined, as it may vary with individuals. Similarly, the maximum period for suckling has been defined to be two years; the minimum period has not been defined, because some women do not produce any milk at all; some have their milk dried up within few months, and some babies are not very fond of mother's milk, or it is harmful for them, and they are fed from other sources.

Different views of Jurists about maximum period of pregnancy and maximum period of suckling

The great Imam Abu Hanifah holds the maximum period of pregnancy to be two years. There are different narrations from Imām Mālik about the maximum period of pregnancy to be four, five or seven years, whereas Imām Shāfi'ī holds it to be four years, which is also the view of Imām Aḥmad, according to more recognized reports from him. (Maḥzarī). The maximum suckling period, which governs the rules of fosterage, is two years according to the majority of the jurists. Imām Mālik, Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal رَحِمَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى and Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad from the Ḥanafī school, are all unanimous on it, and this is also the dictum of Sayyidnā 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا from the Noble Companions. (Ad-Darqutani) Sayyidnā 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ also have the same standpoint. (Ibn Abī Shaibah). Only the great Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has been quoted as saying that a baby can be suckled up to two years and a half. But the correct meaning of this view according to the majority of the Ḥanafī school is that if the baby is weak and does not take any food except mother's milk even after attaining the age of two years, then it is permissible to suckle him for another six months, because it is agreed by all that feeding the baby with mother's milk after the suckling period is unlawful. However, the prevalent *fatwā* (religious verdict) of the Ḥanafī jurists is in accordance with the majority of Imams holding that if a child is suckled after the period of two years, it would not result in creating the relationship of fosterage. Maulānā Thanawī رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى has opined in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān that although the fatwa is in accordance with the view of the majority, yet it is better to be careful in arranging marriage of someone who has been suckled within six months after two years, which means that fosterage relationship should be presumed, as a matter of precaution, even if a child is suckled within six months after reaching the age of two

years.

Some exegetes have tried to interpret the verse **وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصْلُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا** (And his carrying and his weaning is [in] thirty months - 46:15) in a manner that it may support the view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah that the suckling period is two years and a half. But it is not correct, because, as stated in Tafsīr Maḥzarī, the noble companions Sayyidnā 'Alī **عليه السلام** and Sayyidnā 'Uthmān **عليه السلام** have determined the meaning of this verse that the period of thirty months comprises the minimum period of six months for pregnancy, and twenty-four months for suckling.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās **عليه السلام** has said that Qur'ān has determined the combined period for pregnancy and suckling to be thirty months without defining each period separately, because if a baby is born in the normal period of nine months, the suckling period of twenty-one months is adequate, and if the baby is born in seven months, then a suckling period of twenty-three months is required, and if a baby is born in six months only, then a suckling period of full two years is required. (Maḥzarī)

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً (until when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years - 46:15). The lexical meaning of the word **أَشُدُّ** 'ashudd (translated above as 'maturity') is 'stregnth'. The same word used in Sūrah al-An'am (6:152) has been explained to mean 'the age of puberty'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās **عليه السلام** has explained it to mean reaching the age of eighteen years.

In the present verse too, some exegetes have taken the word **أَشُدُّ** 'ashudd' to mean "the age of puberty", and then they have taken the following words, **وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً** "and reaches forty years" as a separate stage in one's life, and not an explanation of 'maturity'. This is the view of Sha'bī and Ibn Zayd **رحمه الله تعالى**. But Ḥasan Baṣrī **رحمه الله تعالى** has held both the sentences to have the same meaning and 'reaching the age of forty years' to be the explanation of 'attaining maturity'. (Qurṭubī) Thus the sequence of the events mentioned in the verse is such that pregnancy has been mentioned first, then the delivery of the child, followed by the suckling period. The reference to the maturity after that means that the child lived, became mature in his physical and mental strength and reached the age of forty years. It was at that point that he was able to turn towards his Creator, and began to pray to Him:

رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا
تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

"My Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favor You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I do righteous deeds that You like. And grant for my benefit goodness in my progeny. Of course, I repent to you, and truly I am one of those who submit to You." (46:15)

All this description is given by the Holy Qur'ān in past tenses and in a style indicating that this description relates to a particular person and a particular event that had already happened before the verse was revealed. That is why Tafsīr Mazharī has opined that all these circumstances relate to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, which have been mentioned in a general form to induce other Muslims also to act in a similar manner. This view is supported by the narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reproduced by Qurṭubī. The gist of this narration is that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ traveled to Syria for trading financed by Sayyidah Khadijah رضي الله عنها, he was twenty years old. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was with him, and he was eighteen years old, and had 'reached his maturity' in the words of the Holy Qur'ān. He witnessed such qualities of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in that journey that he became his ardent admirer, and started accompanying him everywhere even after returning from that journey. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached the age of forty years, and Allah Ta'ālā blessed him with prophethood, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was thirty-eight years old, and he became the first adult male to embrace Islam. When he became forty years old, he prayed to Allah as stated in this verse above; hence the words of the Holy Qur'ān: 'and reached forty years'. Allah Ta'ālā accepted his supplication and gave him 'taufīq' (ability and willingness) to purchase and then set free nine slaves who had embraced Islam and were being tortured mercilessly by their masters.

Similarly his prayer "Grant for my benefit goodness in my progeny" was also accepted in that all his children embraced Islam. Of all the noble companions, only Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه has the distinction that he himself, his parents and his offspring, all embraced Islam and had the honor of being noble companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The question that arises here is that Abū Quḥāfah رضي الله عنه, the father of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, embraced Islam after the conquest of Makkah,

while the whole of this Sūrah is Makki, so how was it appropriate for Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, to mention Allah's blessings upon his parents at that stage when his father had not embraced Islam? One answer is that some exegetes have held these verse to be Madani. Given this view, there is no room for any such question. But if the verse is taken to have been revealed in Makkah, the inclusion of his parents in this supplication of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was by way of praying that they should be blessed by Allah with Islam. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī) ⁽¹⁾

Although, according to this explanation, all these descriptions relate to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, yet the instruction is general for all Muslims that when they reach the age of forty years, their care for the Hereafter should take precedence over all their activities; one ought to repent afresh for the past sins, and take all precautions to save oneself from sins in future, because the experience shows that the ethical manners and habits that one is accustomed to at the age of forty years become permanent in his character, and are not easily changed.

It is reported by Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that when a Mu'min reaches the age of forty years, Allah Ta'ālā becomes lenient in taking account of his deeds; at the age of sixty years Allah gives him *taufīq* of *inābah* (frequently turning) towards Himself; at the age of seventy years all heavenly beings start loving him; at the age of eighty years, Allah Ta'ālā lets his virtues stand, and sins erased; and at the age of ninety years, Allah Ta'ālā forgives all his sins - past and future, and authorizes him to plead for the forgiveness of his family members, and in the heavens it is written alongside his name that he is detained by Allah on earth. (Ibn Kathīr, Musnad of Aḥmad, etc.) It is obvious that all this is about a Mu'min who has lived his life avoiding sins and in accordance with the injunctions of 'Sharī'ah'.

Since Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله تعالى has adopted the first explanation, that the verse does not refer to any particular person, like Sayyidnā Abū Bakr

[1] In order to understand this, one should recapitulate the words of the prayer under discussion. These are: "My Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favor You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents." According to this explanation, the 'favor bestowed' on the parents of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه would mean the mundane benefits they were enjoying. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه prayed that they should be granted *taufīq* to offer gratitude to Allah on these favors by embracing Islam. (Muhammad Taqi Usmanī)

ﷺ, but it is meant for a common people, the specific words, like 'until when he reached his maturity and attained the age of forty years" are all by way of example, wherein the instruction is being imparted that when one reaches the age of forty years, one should have due care for correcting himself and his family members, and his endeavor for the betterment of the Hereafter should take precedence over all his thoughts. (Allah knows best)

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَقَبْلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَتَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ (Such are the people from whom we accept the best of what they did and overlook their evils.... - 46:16) This, too, is a general rule, and if the verse was revealed with reference to Sayyidnā Abu Bakr ﷺ, then he would be the first to be included in its generality. A quotation from Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ which is given below also indicates that sense of the verse is general. Ibn Kathīr has reported the narration of Muḥammad Ibn Ḥaṭīb رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى that once he was with Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ along with some other persons who blamed Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ for some wrong-doings. Thereupon Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ said:

كَانَ عُثْمَانُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِيهِمْ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَقَبْلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَتَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ، قَالَ وَاللَّهِ عُثْمَانُ وَأَصْحَابُ عُثْمَانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ، قَالَهَا ثَلَاثًا. (ابن كثير)

('Uthmān ﷺ was one of those people about whom Allah Ta'ālā has said: "Such are the people from whom We accept the best of what they did, and overlook their evils, (so they will be) among the people of Paradise according to the true promise that was made to them." (46:16) I swear by Allah that 'Uthmān ﷺ and his companions were examples of this verse." Sayyidna 'Alī ﷺ repeated this three times.

وَالَّذِي قَالَ لِيَا أَبَايَ أَيُّ لَكُمْ (And, [contrary to this is the case of] the one who said to his parents, 'Fie upon you both!' - 46:17). The previous verse has laid down the order to serve and obey the parents; this verse announces punishment for one who maltreats his parents and is impertinent to them, specially when they are calling him towards Islam and virtuous deeds, because rejecting their call is a double sin. Ibn Kathīr has said that the verse is general and applies to anyone who maltreats his parents.

Marwan's saying, in one of his addresses, that this verse holds true for 'Abdur Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakr ﷺ has been contradicted by Sayyidah

‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها, as narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī. The fact of the matter is that the verse is general in sense, and there is no correct narration which states this verse to hold true for a particular person.

أَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَاتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا ("You have consumed your good things in your worldly life - 46:20), It means that the infidels will be told that they had already been awarded delights, luxuries and enjoyment in the worldly life for whatever good deeds they had done there; now there is nothing left for them in the Hereafter. It is known from this verse that the good deeds of disbelievers do not have any worth in the Hereafter due to lack of belief or faith, but Allah Ta‘ālā compensates them in this world. The riches and wealth, honour and dignity, etc., which are enjoyed by disbelievers in this world are all recompense for their good deeds, benevolence, sympathy, truthfulness, etc. This rule does not apply to Mu’mins (believers) that if they get any delights, riches and wealth in this world, they would be deprived of their right in the Hereafter.

Incentive for avoiding worldly delights and luxuries

The punishment stated in this verse for the disbelievers is because of their being engrossed in worldly enjoyments. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, his noble companions ﷺ and Tabi‘īn رَحِمَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى had made it a habit to avoid worldly enjoyments, as is evident from their lives. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had charged Sayyidnā Mu‘adh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, when sending him to Yemen, to keep on avoiding the luxuries of this world. Sayyidnā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ has reported the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying that one who is happy with Allah Ta‘ālā giving him scanty sustenance finds Allah Ta‘ālā also happy at his meager deeds. (Mazḥarī from al-Baghawī)

Verses 21- 28

وَاذْكُرْ أَخَاعَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَّتِ النَّذْرُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٢١﴾ قَالُوا اجْتَنَّا لِنَأْفِكَنَّ عَنِ الْهَتَاءِ فَاتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَدُّ وَأُبَلِّغُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَاكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا

مُسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَّتِهِمْ ۚ قَالُوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا ۚ بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ
 بِهِ ۖ رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ تَدْمِرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهَا
 فَاصْبَحُوا لَا يَرَى إِلَّا مَسْكِنُهُمْ ۚ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ
 ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّهُمْ فِيمَا إِن مَّكَّنَّكُمْ فِيهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا
 وَأَبْصَارًا وَآفَئِدَةً ۚ فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَا
 أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ
 مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِنَ الْقُرَىٰ
 وَصَرَفْنَا الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَلَوْلَا نَصْرُهُمُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُرْبَانًا آلِهَةً ۚ بَلْ ضَلُّوا عَنْهُمْ ۚ وَذَلِكَ إِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا
 كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

And remember the brother of (the nation of) 'Ād, when he warned his people at the long, curved sand-dunes—while many warners have passed before him and after him (with the same message)—saying, "Do not worship anyone except Allah. Surely I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day. [21] They said, "Have you come to make us deviate from our gods. So bring us that with which you are threatening us, if you are truthful." [22] He said, "The knowledge is with Allah alone, and I am conveying to you what I am sent with, but I see that you are a people who behave ignorantly." [23] So, when they saw it, in the form of a cloud proceeding towards their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud that will bring us rain." No, it is what you asked to come soon— a wind in which there is a painful punishment, [24] that will destroy every thing with the command of its Lord! So they became such that nothing remained to be seen except their dwelling places. This is how We punish the guilty people. [25] And indeed We had established them in a powerful position in which We did not establish you, and had given to them ears and eyes and hearts, but neither their ears availed them in the least, nor their eyes, nor their hearts, as they used to reject Allah's signs; and they were encircled by what they

used to ridicule. [26] And We have (also) destroyed (other) towns around you^{1} while We had given to them a variety of signs, so that they might return (from disbelief). [27] So, why were they not helped by those whom they had taken as gods, instead of Allah, to achieve closeness (to Him)? Instead, they vanished from them. And (in fact) it was their lie and something they used to forge. [28]

Commentary

These verses are to remind the infidels of the severe punishments faced by earlier people who rejected the messengers sent to them. Special reference is made to 'Ād, the people of Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام who has been described as their 'brother', firstly because he belonged to their tribe, and secondly because he was their well-wisher as a brother. Since this nation lived in valleys surrounded by long, curved sand dunes, called in Arabic 'Aḥqāf', special reference is made to these dunes, so that one could find out their places, if he so wishes when traveling to their localities. It is mentioned in verse 22 that they themselves demanded Allah's punishment to be brought upon them. Then verse 24 states that the punishment was sent to them in the form of a cloud that appeared to be benign, and therefore they were happy to see it in the hope that it would bring rain to them, but in fact it contained the divine punishment in the form of a violent wind that destroyed every thing, leaving nothing except their empty homes that remained as a sign for those who might learn a lesson. The detailed account of the story of 'Ād and Thamūd has already been given in Sūrah Hud (11:50) for which volume 4, page 643 of this book may be consulted. Mention of these events in these verses is in the form of a brief reference, and in verse 26 the infidels of Makkah are reminded that those nations were much more powerful and well-established than the people of Makkah. Still, their power and strength was of no use to them against Allah's punishment. Moreover, verse 28 points out that the false gods believed by them to be their patrons could not save them from the torment they faced, because they were coined only by their false imagination, having no real existence at all.

{1} The reference here is to the towns of Thamūd and the people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام that were in the way of the people of Arabia while they travelled to Syria. The people of 'Ād were in Yemen, towards South from Makkah, while the towns of Thamūd and those of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام were towards North, hence the words, "around you"

Verses 29 - 32

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۖ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ
 قَالُوا أَنصَتُوا ۖ فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ مُّنْذِرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالُوا
 يَقَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ أَفْضَلِ مُوسَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
 يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَى طَرِيقٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ يَقَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ
 اللَّهِ وَآمِنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ
 ﴿٣١﴾ وَمَنْ لَا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ
 لَهُ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

And (recall) when We directed a group of Jinns towards you, who started listening to the Qur'ān. So, when they attended it, they said (to each other), "Keep quiet." Then once it was over, they went back to their people as warners. [29] They said, "O our people, we have heard a book sent down after Mūsā, confirming what was before it, which guides to the truth and to a straight path. [30] O our people, respond to Allah's herald, and believe in him, and (once you do that,) Allah will forgive your sins for you, and will save you from a painful punishment. [31] And the one who does not respond to Allah's herald is not (able) to frustrate (Allah by escaping) in the land, and for him there are no supporters besides Him. Such people are in open error."

[32]

Commentary

The previous verses have condemned the infidelity and the arrogant attitude of the infidels and its destructive results. In these verses, the people of Makkah are being put to shame by telling them that even jinn, who are even more proud and haughty than you, had their hearts softened after hearing the Qur'ān, and they became Muslims; Allah has given the humans more sense and intelligence than jinns, and despite that they do not embrace faith.

The incident of the jinn listening to the Qur'ān and then embracing faith is stated in authentic *aḥādīth*. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was

blessed with prophethood, the jinns were stopped from listening to the news of the heavens, and if a jinn ventured to go upwards to overhear the heavenly news, was chased away by a meteor directed towards him.

The jinns consulted each other to find out the cause of this new phenomenon that has stopped them from listening to the news from the heavens. They believed that some new event happening in the world may have been the cause. In order to discover that event, various groups of jinns spread out in different parts of the world to investigate this phenomenon. One of the groups reached Ḥijāz also when the Holy Prophet ﷺ along with some of his companions was present at a place called Baṭn Nakhlah and was intending to go to the fair of 'Ukāẓ'. (Arabs used to setup trade-fairs on special days in various places for commercial and social purposes where people of all areas used to assemble, set up shops and arrange meetings and social gatherings much like the exhibitions of our days. One such fair used to be set up in 'Ukāẓ where the Holy Prophet ﷺ was intending to go probably for preaching and calling towards Islam.) The Holy Prophet ﷺ was leading the morning prayers in Baṭn nakhlah when the jinns reached there. After hearing the Qur'ān, they exclaimed that this was that new matter which has come between them and the heavenly news. (Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasa'ī, etc., with the authority of Ibn 'Abbās)

According to another narration, when the jinns came there, they directed each other to keep quiet and listen to the Qur'ān. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ finished his prayers, they put their belief in Islam, embraced it, went back to their people and informed them of the real cause of the new phenomenon. They also told their people that they had become Muslims and advised them that they should also embrace the faith. But the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not become aware of the jinns coming and going and of their embracing the faith after listening to the Qur'ān until Sūrah jinn was revealed wherein he was informed of this incident. (Ibn-ul-Mundhir quoting 'Abdul Mālīk)

Another narration states that these jinns were inhabitants of Naṣībīn, either seven or nine in number. When they told their nation about it and motivated them to embrace faith, three hundred of them presented themselves for embracing Islam. (Abū Nu'aim, Al-Wāqidī, quoting Ka'b al-Aḥbār, as in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī). There are diverse narrations in other *aḥādīth* also, but

since they are about various incidents at different times, there is no contradiction between them. That these are different incidents is supported by a statement of Ibn 'Abbās reported by Ṭabarānī in Awsaṭ and by Ibn Marduwhi that the jinns came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ many times.

Khafājī has said that the cumulative outcome of various *aḥādīth* is that jinn presented themselves to the Holy Prophet ﷺ six times for benefiting from his teachings. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī and Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

كِتَابًا أَنْزَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى (a book sent down after Mūsā). Here the words 'after Mūsā' have been taken by some exegetes to indicate that these jinns were Jews, because Injīl that was revealed to Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام, after Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, has not been mentioned. But there is no clear narration to support this inference. That they did not refer to Injīl cannot be a sufficient proof for the jinns being Jews. Another reason for not mentioning Injīl may be that Injīl follows Torah in most commandments, and the Qur'ān, like Torah, is an independent Book, having different commands, rules and regulations. It is likely that the underlying idea was to state that the Qur'ān is the Book which is independent like Torah.

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ (will forgive your sins for you,) The word 'min' used in the text gives the sense of 'some'. If it is taken in this sense here, it would mean that 'some sins' will be forgiven by embracing Islam. It will indicate that only sins relating to the rights of Allah would be forgiven but not the rights of people. But some exegetes have taken 'min' in this verse as an extra word that has no additional meaning in Arabic idioms. Given this interpretation, no explanation is required.

Verses 33 - 35

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْزِ بِخَلْقِهِنَّ
 بِقَدْرِ عَلَى أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَى ۚ بَلَىٰ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾
 وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ ۗ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ
 وَرَبَّنَا ۚ قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا

صَبَرُوا أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ ۚ كَانَتْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ
مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنْ نَّهَارٍ ۚ بَلَّغَ ۚ فَهَلْ يَهْلِكُ إِلَّا
الْقَوْمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Have they not seen that Allah who has created the heavens and the earth, and was not wearied by their creation, does have power to give life to the dead? Yes of course, He is powerful to do every thing. [33] And the day the disbelievers will be presented to the Fire, (it will be said to them,) "Is this not true?" They will say, "Yes, Our Lord!" He will say, "Then taste the punishment, for you used to disbelieve." [34] So, (O prophet,) observe patience, as the resolute messengers observed patience, and be not in haste about them. The Day they will see what they are promised, (it will be) as if they did not stay (in the world) more than an hour in a single day. This is a message. So, none will be destroyed except the sinners. [35]

Commentary

أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ (...as the resolute messengers observed patience - 46:35). The word 'resolute' has been used here as a qualification for all the messengers, and not only for some of them, because the word '*min*' used with '*rusūl*' is not, according to the authentic exegetes, in the sense of 'some'. It is rather for '*Bayān*' (description), to use the grammatical term. The sense is that all messengers are resolute people. Of course, variation in the grades of qualities between messengers is proved from the Holy Qur'an itself:

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

Those are the messengers some of whom We have given excellence over some others (2:253)

Therefore those prophets who excel other prophets in the quality of being resolute and courageous have been given this title in a special way, although there are differences of opinion as to who they are. Majority opinion is that this special title is given to those prophets who have been mentioned in the following verse of Sūrah Al-Ahzab verse 7:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ

And (recall) when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you and from Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā, the son of Maryam. And We did take from them a firm covenant, (33:7)

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها states that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said "The delights, luxuries and pleasures of this world do not befit Muḥammad ﷺ and his family, because Allah Ta'ālā does not accept anything less than patience from those who are 'resolute', and I have received this divine order: فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعِزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ" So, O prophet, observe patience, as the resolute messengers observed patience. (46:35)"

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Aḥkāf (The Sand-dunes)
Ends here